

Message Text

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14

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-09

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-03 USIA-12

PRS-01 SS-14 NSC-10 NIC-01 RSR-01 /110 W
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R 200430 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6400

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 675

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: ELAB, NZ

SUBJECT: SOVIET TRADE UNION OFFICIAL TO TOUR NEW ZEALAND

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: FORTHCOMING VISIT BY TOP RANKING SOVIET TRADE UNION OFFICIAL AND TWO SEPARATE SOVIET UNION GROUPS INDICATE INCREASED SOVIET INTEREST IN NEW ZEALAND UNIONS. END SUMMARY.
2. FOL SECRETARY KNOX INFORMED EMBASSY MARCH 16 OF PENDING VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND BY HEAD OF AACTU INTERNATIONAL SECTION BORIS A. AVERYANOV. VISIT SCHEDULED TO BEGIN MARCH 24, BUT KNOX WAS UNCERTAIN HOW LONG SOVIET UNION OFFICIAL WOULD BE IN COUNTRY. VISIT, KNOX CLAIMS, IS BEING ARRANGED BY SOVIET LEGATION.
3. KNOX ALSO REVEALED THAT FOL HAS RECEIVED INVITATION FROM AACTU FOR TWO FOL MEMBERS TO BE GUESTS OF AACTU AT MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS IN MOSCOW. INVITATION ALSO RECEIVED FROM CHILE TRADE UNION GROUP TO ATTEND UNSPECIFIED CONFERENCE IN CHILE. KNOX INDICATED FOL EXECUTIVE HAS MADE NO DECISION ON THESE INVITATIONS AS THEY CONFLICT WITH DATES OF FOL' S ANNUAL CONFERENCE. HE ADDED THAT SOVIET LEGATION HAS ALSO SAID INVITATIONS UNCLASSIFIED

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FOR FOL PRESIDENT SKINNER AND KNOX WILL BE ISSUED FOR SEPARATE VISIT TO SOVIET UNION IN JUNE OR JULY. ACCORDING TO KNOX, SKINNER HAS STATED HE WOULD LIKE TO ACCEPT THIS INVITATION IF KNOX WILL ACCOMPANY HIM. KNOX MAINTAINS BOTH FOL LEADERS CANNOT BE OUT OF COUNTRY AT SAME TIME, AND SOME OTHER FOL EXECUTIVE MEMBER MAY ACCOMPANY SKINNER TO USSR.

4. PRESIDENT OF NEW ZEALAND PRINTING UNION ALSO HAS INVITATION TO TOUR USSR THIS SUMMER. TWO SEPARATE SOVIET TRADE UNION DELEGATIONS ALSO SCHEDULED, OR HAVE RECENTLY, VISITED NEW ZEALAND. KNOX HAS COMMENTED ON INCREASED SOVIET INTEREST IN NEW ZEALAND UNION LEADERS AND NOTES FOL EXECUTIVE IS INCLINED TO ACCEPT ANY INVITATION WHICH OFFERS FREE TRIP OUTSIDE OF NEW ZEALAND.

5. COMMENT: SOVIET TRADE UNIONS APPEAR TO BE STEPPING UP THEIR COURTSHIP OF NEW ZEALAND UNION LEADERS. EFFORT DOVETAILS WITH EFFORTS BY NEW ZEALAND COMMUNIST UNION OFFICIALS TO TAKE MORE MODERATE, RESPONSIVE LINE WITHIN FOL AND TO CONSISTENTLY SUPPORT FOL LEADERS. COMBINED EFFORT MAY BE AIMED AT IMPROVING IMAGE OF LEFT WING UNION LEADERS TO PUT THEM IN BETTER POSITION TO CONTEST FOL LEADERSHIP WHEN SKINNER FINALLY STEPS DOWN. WILLINGNESS OF FOL OFFICIALS TO ACCEPT SOVIET INVITATIONS IS BASED ON DESIRE TO TRAVEL AT SOMEONE ELSE'S EXPENSE; FOL REALIZATION THAT CONTACT WITH SOVIET TRADE UNIONS NO LONGER HAS A STIGMA ATTACHED TO IT, AND ASSUMPTION THAT SUCH CONTACT WITH SOVIETS CARRIES NO RECIPROCAL RESPONSIBILITY. ONE POSSIBLE EXPLANATION FOR THIS INCREASED INTEREST, AS MENTIONED BY KNOX, IS THE SOVIET CONCERN OVER THE FORTHCOMING PRC PRESENCE IN NEW ZEALAND.

WOOD

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973WELLIN00675
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: WELLINGTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730336/aaaaifim.tel
Line Count: 102
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: collinp0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29-Oct-2001 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <29-Jan-2002 by collinp0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 971222
Subject: SOVIET TRADE UNION OFFICIAL TO TOUR NEW ZEALAND
TAGS: ELAB, NZ
To: EA
SECSTATE WASHDC INFO CANBERRA
MELBOURNE
MOSCOW
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005